make certain small amendments in the Stamp Act. These are the legislative measures which the Government have in contemplation, and they have not, at present, before them any other Government business which is likely to be ready in January with the exception of one or two supplementary demands."

IV

COMMITTEE TO SUGGEST WAYS TO EXPEDITE THE DISPOSAL OF NON-OFFICIAL BUSINESS.

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—"With reference to the complaint made the day before yesterday about the congestion of non-official business by the hon. the Deputy President and others, and my remarks on the subject, and with reference also to the motion tabled by the hon. Member Mr. P. T. Rajan, I have decided to appoint a committee of the House to consider the whole question and report how far the congestion can be avoided and what changes, if any, can, in their opinion, be made to ensure that object.

"I request the following hon. Members to be so good as to serve on the Committee :—

1. Diwan Bahadur P. Kesava Pillai (Deputy President).
2. Mr. R. Venkataratnam Nayudu.
3. Sir T. Desika Achariyar.
4. The Rev. W. Meston.
5. Mr. M. Ratnaswami.
6. The hon. the Raja of Panagal.
7. Mr. T. A. Ramalinga Chettiyar.
8. Mr. C. Ramalinga Reddi.
9. ,, O. Tanikachala Chettiyar.
10. ,, P. T. Rajan.
11. ,, M. Ramachandra Rao Pantulu.
12. ,, M. Krishnan Nayar.
13. ,, Muhammad Usman.
14. ,, T. Arumainatha Pillai.

"Should the Committee consider any amendment to the Standing Orders necessary to give effect to their recommendations, they are requested to be so good as to state what those amendments are. The Deputy President will preside over the deliberations of the Committee and the Secretary to the Council will be the Secretary to the Committee.

"In view of the appointment of the Committee, I trust that the hon. Member Mr. P. T. Rajan will not consider it necessary to make his motion."

The following motion was withdrawn :—

Mr. P. T. RAJAN :—

That this Council resolves to request the hon. the President to appoint a committee of the House to consider and report on suitable methods for the quick disposal of non-official business, chiefly resolutions.

Mr. C. RAMALINGA REDDI :—"May I ask the hon. the Leader of the House whether it will not be possible to allot some time for the discussion of the various resolutions which have been tabled. At the rate at which we are progressing, I am afraid that not a single resolution will be discussed till the 31st March 1923, when the Council will be prorogued. The only influence that this mode of transacting business has on the hon. Members is that when once they send notice of a resolution, they feel that nothing more is left for them to be done because the resolution is not at all likely to be discussed in the Council."

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—"As the hon. Member Mr. C. Ramalinga Reddi is on the Committee, I have no doubt that he will make
11-30 a.m. his influence felt. If he is able to convince the members of the Committee that he is in the right, the Committee may embody his views in its report."

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Mr. C. RAMALINGA REDDI :—" My submission to the hon. the President is that the Committee will take some time to submit its report; such being the case, will it not be possible to allot some time for the discussion of resolutions either at this meeting or at the January meeting? I am not sure when the report of the Committee will be ready and until then the resolutions cannot be taken up for discussion. Some of the resolutions deal with matters of importance and they are badly affected by the way in which we are proceeding now."

Diwan Bahadur M. RAMACHANDRA RAO PANTULU :—" From the statement of the hon. Sir Charles Todhunter as regards Government business for the next meeting, it is quite clear that all the five days will be taken up in the discussion of the University Bill, the Irrigation Bill, etc. In view of that fact may I suggest, as it is the wish of the House that non-official business should also be taken up at that meeting, that we may consider the advisability of extending the period to some more days?

" I have to offer one other remark. As regards non-official business of an urgent character, viz., resolutions included in the agenda, if the House unanimously desires you to depart from the existing practice, I would suggest for your consideration whether you may not, in the exercise of your discretion and with the full approval of the House, allow precedence to such resolutions as you consider to be of urgent importance. If these suggestions are adopted I should think that the end in view of hon. Members will be attained. I only submit it to you for your consideration. With the approval of the House you may suggest any suitable course for its adoption."

The hon. Sir CHARLES TODHUNTER :—" May I say on behalf of the Government that the Government are perfectly willing to continue to sit for as many days as you may prescribe? We have no wish to shut out any non-official business. So far as we are concerned, we are ready to sit as long as you think fit, Sir. As regards the second suggestion, I am afraid it involves a departure from the Legislative Council instructions contained in the Standing Orders. I leave it to you Sir, to say whether such a departure may be made with or without the consent of the House. I venture to think that we are bound by the rules until we alter them."

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—" The duration of the next meeting is entirely a matter for us to decide, and it is not a matter in which the Government have any voice. I would let the House have as many days as they may want in January. What does Mr. M. Ramachandra Rao propose as regards the duration of the next meeting?"

Diwan Bahadur M. RAMACHANDRA RAO PANTULU :—" I would suggest two more days in addition to the five days which will be taken up by Government business, altogether seven days, excluding Sundays and holidays."

This suggestion was put to the House and it was decided that the Council should sit for seven working days from January 29."

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—" As regards the other proposal, if it is the wish that I should discriminate between urgent and non-urgent matters, I would rather deprecate it. Because, hon. Members may remember that when we began two years ago, we for some time worked in that way, leaving it to the Secretary to arrange the business according to the order of

importance. I believe that his arrangement was so good that it met with the unanimous approval of the House. If I remember right, it was the then Leader of the House, the hon. Sir Lionel Davidson, who objected to this procedure on the score that he wanted that the Standing Orders should be carried out, and I felt that he was right because, after all, the Standing Orders express the wish of the House, and it is my duty to carry them out so long as they are there. Even apart from the technical aspect of the question, I would rather that it were not left to me to decide what is urgent and what is not urgent."

Diwan Bahadur M. Ramachandra Rao Pantulu :—"I suggested this not as a permanent solution of the difficulty but as a temporary expedient in view of the fact that there are resolutions, like the one on Tanjore Settlement, on which the House will have no opportunity to express its opinion, if they are not discussed until we disperse at the end of March. I may state for your consideration that when the Government of India Bill was considered, the House of Commons resolved that the discussion should come to an end in four days, and permitted the speaker to select the amendments which he considered to be urgent or important. I do not wish that we should deviate from the ordinary practice settled by the Standing Orders. But if there are matters of importance which cannot be discussed under ordinary circumstances, it is for the consideration of the House and for you, Sir, to decide what should be done."

The hon. the President :—"After all is said and done, we are still bound by the Standing Orders and not by any procedure adopted elsewhere. The suggestion made by Mr. Ramachandra Rao is a matter for the consideration of the Committee which we have appointed. As for the fear that the Committee may take an unduly long time, I think if the hon. the Deputy President puts a little of his vigour into it, it need not prolong its labours; in fact, there is no reason why the Committee should not sit to-morrow and give us its report the next day. ('Hear, hear' from Mr. Ranganatha Mudaliyar.) It will not take much time, and when the Committee's report comes under the consideration of the Council, hon. Members can move such amendments to the Standing Orders as they consider necessary. Till then we must abide by the existing rules and orders, but we can take any amount of time for our own work. If the hon. Members find that the period of two days which we are taking is insufficient at the end of the seven days in January next, they can get over the difficulty by telling me that it is their unanimous wish to sit for two or three days more. These things are entirely in the hands of the Council. I shall be very glad if hon. Members use their undoubted powers to regulate their own business. I am wholly in their hands. There need not be any doubt about it."

Mr. C. Ramalinga Reddi :—"Sir, what I want to draw attention to is that the only way by which popular opinion can be brought to bear upon the Government, as at present, is by passing resolutions in Council. It is these resolutions that will guide the members of the Finance Committee in adjusting the budget; but if private business is allowed to accumulate like this, I do not know how the Finance Committee will be able to mould the policy of the Government in framing the budget, etc. I think this question requires consideration, and that we should sit for a longer period, if necessary in January, to get through private business."